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Russia Hands Down First Fine for Soviet-Nazi Comparisons

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Soviet tanks in Berlin, 1945. **tankfront.ru**

Russia has levied its first fine for likening the Soviet Union to Nazi Germany since prohibiting such comparisons earlier this month, the Moscow-based Sova Center for Information and Analysis reported.

Under the law signed by President Vladimir Putin on July 1, publicly comparing the goals and actions of the U.S.S.R. and Red Army with those of the Nazi government and its army during World War II is punishable by fines of 1,000 to 2,000 rubles ($18 to $36) or 15 days in jail.

A court in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar found pensioner Vadim Kiselyov guilty of the administrative charges and fined him 1,000 rubles on Thursday, Sova said.

He was charged over messages in his apartment building's group chat in which he recommended his neighbors read Soviet art historian Nikolai Nikulin's memoir, "Memories of War," in which he recounts his experience of World War II.

Kiselyov also discussed the actions of Soviet soldiers toward German civilians during the war, Sova said.

Sova said the messages presented as evidence to the court do not demonstrate Kiselyov's guilt and called the court's ruling unlawful.

"His statement, despite the emotional expressions, is an example of a peaceful discussion, which, from our point of view, should not be limited," the center wrote.

Critics of the new law say it is the latest attempt by Moscow to shape historical memory and warn that it will have a chilling effect on anyone wishing to write about Soviet-era crimes.

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